

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:

APPROPRIATIONS

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PUBLIC WORKS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 2, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am writing to request information concerning the implementation of authorized compensation to members of our Armed Forces whose service has been extended by the military's stop loss policy since 2001.

On October 21, 2009, the Department of Defense announced plans to provide retroactive special payments to service members for each month they were extended as a result of stop loss. Over the past seven years, over 160,000 military personnel have had their service duty contracts extended due to stop loss orders. I have long contended that we must give recognition and compensation to these brave men and women for their extraordinary service. For this reason, I authorized legislation in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress to provide payments to all service members affected by this policy since 2001.

I am concerned by reports that members of the Army are having problems with the website established by the service to accept applications for this program. While I understand that many of the issues have been corrected, I ask that you continue to work to ensure that the application process for each service is efficient and service members receive responses to their concerns in a timely manner. In addition, reports indicate that 80 percent of the claims that have been submitted to the Army have been disputed and assigned to a case manager and currently no payments have been distributed. I respectfully request information concerning the total number of claims each service has received, the process that has been established by each service to distribute these payments, and estimated time frames for distributing payments in cases that are undisputed as well as those that have been referred to case managers.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

